

The Toilet of Venus (After Velazquez)

Ducats?

Escudos?

Reales?

How about dollars for you, Diego?

I trust

Phillip 4 paid you well

for bestowing upon me

the enduring

Toilet of Venus with

a back line

like mine

mirrored soft loveliness

her private sweet

angelic moment -

thank you, Velazquez.

Do I care

if you served

collared fools?

not at all

or seem to be

a royal Spanish dealer

Italian collectors

feared?

Why not!

Painter of

Moorish expulsions?

Si,

pero

your work perished

in history's fires

making

amends.

A slave owner,
yes but
 you liberated Pareja
who flew to freedom
brush in hand
paint on his lips
 studio on his mind.

For craving noble lineage?
Gracias a Dios
there was
 no DNA swab
for you
to source yet

what a painting you would make:
there in tender-hued landscape
 yourself discernible with
plain Porto precursors
proudly ascending
 from scorned sad graves
in one resounding
 L'chaim!

knowing you, Diego
unaware
 outsmarted courts
painted popes
into a corner
outwitted inquisitors
 at their game.

Manet/Picasso
Dali/Bacon -

you saw them coming
spread canvas across centuries
ahead of your time
painter of painters
embodying Venus
in
a theology
of
painting.

Siobhán Ó Mócháin Breathnach
January 10, 2012
Sic nos sic sacra tuemur